REACH HIGHER

Lakeshore Excellence Foundation

1 MILLION

$1000000

$250,000	RAV Employee Appreciation Program
$220,000	Early Literacy Program
$175,000	LHS Weight Room Upgrades & Equipment
$175,000	Classroom Educational and Technology Upgrades
$80,000	CNC Machines for the CTE Program
$50,000	Broadcasting Class Equipment
$50,000	Continuation of the PLC Initiative

Every donation is used to benefit students, staff, and the Lakeshore Community.

The LEF's BIGGEST Fundraising Goal Yet!

Together we can do this!

READ MORE PAGE 3.

WELCOME FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Your volunteerism makes a world of difference.

READ MORE PAGE 2.

trustees

JC Anderson
Leslie Arbanas
Ryan Arnt
Meghan Bacin
Sophie Bauchet
Ludo Beaufils
Kate Beckrow
Kelly Bushu
Zeb Deitrich
Chad Deja
Greg Eding
Andrew Glisson
Janine Harrison
Lori Hellenga
Lori Marciniak
Sterling Massey
Kim McAllister
Elizabeth Meeth
Phil Molloy
Julia Pechtel
Jennifer Powers
Jim Roberts
Bill Scaletta
Lewis Scott
Matt Swab
Kathleen Wolf

READ MORE ABOUT OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

lefonline.org/board-members

The addition of four new LEF Board Members is a point of pride for the Lakeshore Excellence Foundation. The board is now comprised of 26 active volunteers who meet regularly to discuss projects, grants, programs, and fundraising efforts aimed at enhancing, enriching, or supplementing learning opportunities for students, staff, and community. Learn more about the LEF Board at lefonline.org/board-members.

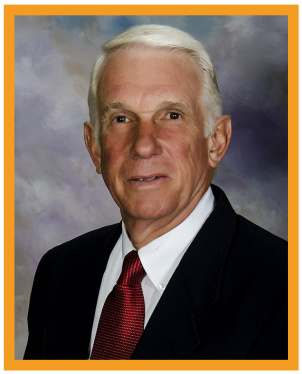
LEF'S BIGGEST FUNDRAISING GOAL YET!

$1 MILLION COMMITMENT

- RAV Employee Appreciation Program
- Early Literacy Program
- High School Weight Room Upgrades
- Classroom Educational & Technology Upgrades
- CTE Program CNC Machines
- Broadcasting Class Equipment
- Continuation of the PLC Initiative

Excellent schools are the foundation of excellent communities. When you invest in Lakeshore Public Schools through the LEF, you are investing in the quality of life in our community both today and tomorrow.

TOGETHER, WE CAN DO THIS ...



J.C. Anderson, Chairman

During the last two Chairman's letters, I recognized two pillars of our community who had recently passed away: Merlin Hanson and Steve Upton. Both of these men and their families have been frequent and substantial contributors to the LEF. As a result of their philanthropic actions, the Lakeshore Excellence Foundation (LEF), the Lakeshore Public Schools, and the greater Berrien County area, have all been positively impacted. I am convinced that the recent announcement by the LEF would have been strongly supported by both Merlin and Steve as an excellent use of our funds.

In case you haven't heard, in early October, the LEF announced a commitment to fund $1,000,000 in projects that improve the educational experiences throughout Lakeshore Public Schools.

That commitment is represented by seven projects that are detailed throughout this newsletter. The projects span a broad spectrum of needs, and there is something for everyone. From physical changes, to program support, to teacher recognition, this major investment supports a comprehensive strategy that improves the educational experiences throughout the Lakeshore School District.

I think that a quick review of the LEF fundraising approach is in order. When I was asked to become the leader of the LEF in 2012, the fundraising approach was in a very sequential manner. First a project was identified, then a fundraising effort was developed, then the fundraising was executed, and finally the project initiated and then completed. This approach was time-consuming, but very financially secure because 100% of the funds were secured before the project spending started. When we consider our LEF mission of enhancing the well-being and education of the Lakeshore students, the more projects that we can fund during a school year the better! With that in mind, we've decided to commit our support to some projects before all of the money has been raised so we can have a greater, more immediate, positive impact. As such, we have moved to a continuous fundraising approach. The **Lancer Leader** annual appeal, the **Online Auction** in February, the **Golf Scramble** in June, and the **Cash Raffle** in September, all play an essential part in raising the money to support our project commitments. This investment approach may be a bit more financially risky, as multiple project commitments are made and the project executions are in process before the total financial commitment has been raised, but the impact outweighs the risks.

We have approximately $600,000 of the $1,000,000 project commitment covered, leaving the LEF in need of raising the remaining $400,000 to close the gap. This is the largest fundraising need that I have experienced as Chair of the LEF. I feel encouraged, however, that we have never failed in our ability to generate the funds needed to support excellence in education at Lakeshore. This is where we continue to ask for your financial support to help bridge this funding gap.

I have been around education all my life. My parents, my sister and my daughter have all been teachers. Whether you've been around educators like I have or not, it's hard to disagree with the fact that excellence in education benefits us all. But we recognize that excellence takes investment. We can have the absolute best facility, the absolute best programs and curriculum but it still takes an effective teacher to put it into meaningful execution. That is one reason why I personally feel that the RAV (Recognize, Appreciate and Value) project, in particular, is a critical investment to continue to increase the effectiveness of our teachers. Think about it ... each of us can name a former teacher that really supported us in our efforts to do better and/or guided us towards a career. Teachers are a foundational component of educational excellence.

Please consider that improving the educational experiences of our staff and students is an investment that will pay dividends for decades. Together, we can do this ...

Sincerely,

J.C. Anderson

J.C. Anderson
Chair, LEF

LEF Major Project Initiative

IT'S TIME TO "RAV" --

Recognize, Appreciate and Value our Educational Staff at Lakeshore!

Best of the Best
John Girton, Lakeshore High School Teacher

Best of the Best
Megan Vree, Roosevelt Teacher

Best of the Best
Christen Hopkins, High School Secretary

The LEF approved a $250,000 investment over the next five years to fund the *Recognize, Appreciate and Value* (RAV) employee appreciation program.

This program was initiated after the appointment of Susan Toothman as Director of Human Resources and Communication with the Lakeshore administration. Components of this program were done during her time as Middle School Principal. Knowing the challenges for our education staff in today's environment, the administration wanted to take what she had learned and build out a program to improve employee morale and motivation.

"Schools where employees feel respected, valued and appreciated are more efficient in teaching and learning," says Toothman. "When employees feel supported, they are more likely to go the extra mile for their students and colleagues. This creates a positive school culture that benefits everyone."

The program's goal is to show appreciation to the staff for their years of service, hard work and dedication. The program was designed to encourage loyalty, set an example, and to create a positive work environment that boosts employee morale.

The main initiatives with RAV program are:

Milestone Celebration Employee Appreciation Program

This program celebrates teachers starting at five years of service up to 30 years. Staff will receive gift cards and color-coded lanyards to represent their years of service to Lakeshore Public Schools.

End of Year Staff Recognition Program

The *R. James Johnson Award* and *Totzke-Nye Support Staff Person of the Year Award* are given at the end of each school year. Each recipient will receive a plaque with their name on it and a gift card.

District Pulse "The Best of the Best" Recognition Program

The *Best of the Best* award is the recognition given to staff members who give their best, day in and day out, for the success of the students and staff at Lakeshore Public Schools. The *District Pulse* will highlight four *Best of the Best* award winners in each publication with a gift card and stainless steel tumbler.

Mentorship Program for All New Staff to Lakeshore Public Schools

The *Mentorship Program* for all new teachers is supported through peer encouragement and information they need to learn, grow and enjoy their first years of teaching at Lakeshore Public Schools.

"Welcome to the Community" Basket for New Teachers

Moving to a new community and school system can be a bit overwhelming. This initiative is focused on helping that change become easier while boosting the local community businesses. New teachers will be presented with a basket filled with items from our local community restaurants, Lakeshore gear, and gift cards to help fund school supplies.

LEF Project Grant

EXPANDING AND IMPROVING PROGRAMS

LEF donations fund career preparedness for local high school students.

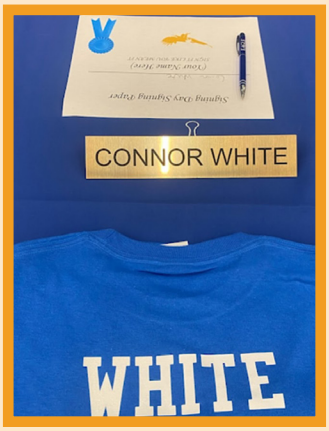
Lakeshore Public Schools has been working for several years to advance opportunities in Career Technical Education (CTE) by expanding and improving programs while increasing accessibility to students across a diverse spectrum.

The Lakeshore Excellence Foundation helped forward that focus through a major project grant that helped Lakeshore High School establish a HVAC program. Mike Schmidt, CTE director at Lakeshore High School, explained that this year, with the help of LEF funding, they were able to add an electrical section as well. Both HVAC and electric share a common class space to learn, which also allows for the use of similar equipment needed for each specialty. LEF funds helped to purchase air conditioners and furnaces that are used to certify HVAC students through the NC3 program. Students learn how to properly charge a system, troubleshoot heat pump issues, learn about air flow (testing and adjusting for max efficiency out of the system or equipment), and test variable speed motors.

In addition to purchasing the new HVAC equipment, funds were also used to set up six electrical panels where students can learn to wire a basic panel, lights, receptacles, and switches (3-way and single poles.) More equipment is also on the way that will allow students to work with simple circuits and three phase motors. The students in the electrical class follow the NEC (National Electrical Code) to make sure everything is safely wired. Once the task is complete, the students get to test the system and have the opportunity to troubleshoot the circuits. All students in the electrical section will be certified through NC3 on how to use a multimeter. The NC3 certification gives students the most up to date knowledge and competencies that are valued and required by most employers.

CTE students with some of the HVAC equipment

This year's program consists of approximately 16 students, up from 10 last year. Students from other area schools are involved in the program as well, including: St. Joseph, Coloma, Buchanan, Bridgman, and Berrien Springs. Lakeshore's HVAC instructor, Brian Murphy, and Electrical instructor, Jeff Chorny, collaborate with multiple local businesses, many of which are willing to offer their expertise with the students. Dave Boelcke, original owner of Boelcke Heating and Air Conditioning, has shared his time and knowledge with the HVAC students as well as electricians from Lincoln Tech, Beaudoin Electric, and IBEW local 153 out of South Bend.



Connor White's Eagle Technologies Apprenticeship acceptance items.

"I'm grateful that Lakeshore offered CTE classes while I was there. Both the electrical and CAD courses piqued my interest, and opened a door for me to pursue an apprenticeship with Eagle Technologies," says Connor White, '23 graduate of Lakeshore High School.

Eagle Technologies accepted only 10 applicants for their apprenticeship this year, and out of over 100 who applied, Connor was one of the 10 chosen.

"We wouldn't be able to have these programs without the LEF's support," says Schmidt. "These certifications can be used to increase opportunities for employment, which is wonderful for our students."

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

FAR MORE THAN FOOTBALL

Lakeshore might have been looking to hire a football coach three years ago, but they got so much more than that. What Lakeshore didn't see coming was a transformational leader and an inspirational role model who would get more people involved in the football program than any other activity at the high school. Coach Danny Thompson's enthusiasm has been contagious and has captured not just the football players, but parents, other athletes - including a former diver, cheerleader, and band member, softball and tennis players, and an English teacher. They are all part of the football community that Thompson is creating and he isn't done yet.

Coach Danny Thompson

Growing up in a small town, Thompson knows a lot about struggling to find confidence and his place.

Raised by his mom, grandmother, and his aunt, Thompson said he had love and support, but he "was always missing something." He now helps his team learn to gain yardage on the field while also gaining confidence both in the classroom and in life.

Elementary and middle school were difficult times for Thompson. It was reflected in his poor grades and 45 absences during sixth grade alone. "It wasn't until high school that my peers got to see the true me. What made the difference? I found my 'something' - football. I found out that I was good at something. I started to gain confidence and self-worth. For the first time, I found out I could be as good as others around me and I found something that allowed me to fit in."

As a teacher today, Thompson relates to those students who are not enjoying school. Thompson says, "As a leader and class clown, I found out who I was and wanted to be. I enjoyed history and socializing and loved the 30 minute bathroom break. Football was my carrot to get passing grades and without it, I am not sure what I would have done. I had amazing teachers/coaches who looked out for me and got after me when I was getting too big for my britches. The best thing about my teachers were the ones who I was closest with actually hated sports, but they understood how important they were to me, so they made an effort to talk with me and support me. I never forgot that, and it would mold the teacher that I am today."

While attending college and playing football for Olivet, Thompson had a game-ending injury and found himself lost again. "I didn't know what or where to focus my energy. After a lot of time and talking to some of my former coaches and teachers I decided that I loved a couple of things in my life: football, high school, and histo-

Continued NEXT page

One way that our district is working towards becoming more inclusive has been the establishment of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coalition (DEIC). The DEIC is a cohort of passionate Lakeshore students who are committed to improving the learning experience for all students.

FAR MORE THAN FOOTBALL continued ...

ry. Where could I have those things in my life and make a living? I had education as my major, but it wasn't until this moment in my life that I really knew I wanted it," Thompson said.

While Thompson is Lakeshore's first black coach and teacher, he is also the first person to tell anyone that this distinction means absolutely nothing. What matters in life: accepting others. "We live in a pretty ugly world sometimes and most of that comes because we choose to judge instead of meeting and talking to people. I have been sort of a trailblazer all my life and had a gift to bring people from different backgrounds together. I credit this to my mother. She raised me to see people - not - race and it has really formed the way I live my life. With my work with the Diversity Club, I try to bring the same ideal to the kids and share my own personal experiences to help them on their journey. I think for students of color in the building it does a lot to see a person in my position because they can see themselves. I think it is important not only to focus on race but to build the understanding that all people struggle with something and having conversations with others will open our eyes. If people don't know, then they will never understand. If they are open to conversations and look beyond their own situations, they start understanding what it means to have empathy. If we can get these kids to think with empathy we can change the world. My mission is to help create a culture of acceptance with the students of Lakeshore so they can carry that with them into the next chapter of their lives."

The bottom line: Find your something, accept others and lead with empathy. It's working well for Coach Thompson. It could work well for you too. And you might just change the world while you are at it.

LEF MAJOR PROJECT

ONE-TO-ONE TECHNOLOGY

Stewart Elementary third graders: Viviana, Charlie, and Oscar.

One-to-One Technology at Lakeshore Public Schools' elementary schools is now up and running! We're told, now that every student is equipped with their own computer, the potential for personalized learning, digital literacy, and engagement has soared. Having one-to-one technology has helped empower Lakeshore's elementary students to explore, learn and collaborate. We wouldn't have been able to make this major project possible without our donors. Thanks to all of you who support our mission - together we are helping the students, staff, and community *Reach Higher*.

LEF GRANTS IN ACTION

LAKESHORE MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK CLUBS

Lakeshore Middle School students enjoying book club.

Your donations in action!

Lakeshore Middle School 7th graders had fun forming book clubs in their English Language Arts classrooms with the help of new books purchased through LEF grant funding.

The students read together as groups and studied their chosen authors, all while learning about character traits and author's craft. We know that reading matters and are excited about the hours of learning and enjoyment these Lakeshore Middle School students will get thanks to the generosity of so many in our community!

To donate, or learn more about our mission, visit: lefonline.org.

The next great idea for our schools can come from anyone: students, teachers, staff, or community members.

APPLY TODAY AT LEFONLINE.ORG

Patti Florian Student Enrichment

If you are a Lakeshore student in any grade, kindergarten through high school, this grant may be of interest to you! Patti Florian Student Enrichment Grants are awarded for activities or events that promote self-improvement through exploration, discovery, study and interaction.

Foundation Project

The best ideas in education come from teachers. If your proposal costs over $2,500 you should consider applying for a Foundation Project Grant. Do you have a big idea that would benefit a large constituency of Lakeshore students, staff, and/or the community?

Professional Development

The Professional Development Grant is for staff who seek to bring continual energy, talent and passion to their roles. Do you have a great opportunity to develop and strengthen your professional talents and skills by attending a conference, seminar, workshop, college course or other experience?

Staff Support

Do you have an idea for a quality educational experience that would benefit Lakeshore students, staff, and/or the community? If your proposal costs up to $2,500 and could be completed within the year following the grant award, you should consider applying for Staff Support grant.

Sponsorship Opportunity

LAKESHORE BAND TRAILER

Early in the 1990s, band parents Bob and Vicki May had a vision for the Lakeshore Band. They knew the band needed a means of transporting all their equipment to competitions, and a semi-trailer would be just the thing. Bob found the first trailer, and since another band parent was a graphic designer, the first customized Lakeshore Band trailer was soon a reality.

A decade later, that trailer was no longer big enough for the band, as enrollment had grown from 91 to 235 – thanks to the guidance of Lori VonKoenig. Not only did instruments need to be transported, but also uniforms and sound equipment. Band parent Mark Mabry found the new trailer, and became its caretaker and driver for the next 25 years. He outfitted it with lights, ramps, and interior hangers.

Lakeshore Band Trailer

Why is the band trailer so important?

Not only does it transport all the uniforms, flags, and sound equipment, but it also serves as a billboard for the school district and band program when it is off site. It is a source of pride for the band, parents, alumni, and the entire community. Matt Pagel, the current director of bands for Lakeshore, says "The trailer is an outward representation of the pride the community takes in the program and the high standard of excellence to which we hold ourselves."

Until this year, no extensive maintenance had been done on the trailer since its purchase. After two decades of travel, including 16 trips to Disney World in Florida and adventures to Washington DC and Arizona, it was definitely time! The band contracted with Premier Graphics of Grand Rapids to do the new graphic wrap, and K & R of Holland for the joint repairs, sand blasting, rust removal, and other repairs. The trailer is now finished, and made its first road trip to a band competition in October.

The trailer repairs came at a cost of $25,000 to the band program. To help offset some of these costs, sponsors may "purchase" their name/company logo to be placed on the back doors of the trailer. The cost of this decal is $2,000. The Lakeshore Excellence Foundation joined fellow sponsors Red Coach Donuts and the LECO Corporation in donating to the cause to help support our high school band. Additional sponsorships are available and appreciated.

If anyone is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact band director Matt Pagel at mpagel@lpslancer.net. Next time you drive by the high school when the band is going to a competition, take a look at the beautiful new trailer, and as always, Go Band!

REACH HIGHER
Lakeshore Excellence Foundation

LEF Programs

2023 ART AROUND TOWN

This past June, we recognized some of Lakeshore Public Schools' finest young artists as our 2023 Art Around Town winners!

Twenty students from Lakeshore's elementary, middle and high school were chosen after what was a very difficult judging competition by retired Lakeshore teacher, Gail Harrah!

The artwork is now on display at local businesses that so graciously sponsored our students. Make sure to check out these amazing works of art the next time you stop by the following businesses, and thank them for supporting the students and our fine arts programs at Lakeshore Public Schools. See all the works of art on our Facebook page at: https://lnkj.in/t/lef23art

Gail Harrah, Retired Lakeshore Teacher

Amelia Ryan –
Mead & White Electrical Contractors Inc. – Lincoln Charter Township
2055 W. John Beers Road
Stevensville, MI 49127

Anvikoha Kadus –
Anytime Fitness
5643 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Braden Schiman –
Southshore Health & Racquet Club
3630 Tennis Court
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Carlee Holt –
Full Circle Café
5729 St. Joseph Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Claire Grasley –
Golden Muse Winery
8903 Stevensville-Baroda Road
Baroda, MI 49101

Clara Kleiman –
Red Coach Donuts
5811 St. Joseph Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Cydney Bacon –
Austin Tax & Financial
715 Columbia Avenue
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Emely Piedra –
Sturgis Bank and Trust
312 Main Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Gaia Escobar –
Bit of Swiss
4333 Ridge Road
Stevensville, MI 49127

Gio Flores Ortiz –
Priebe's Woodworking
2113 Plaza Drive
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Isabella Tomasi –
Y Not Ice Cream & Smoothies
5651 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Jovie Detrich –
Superintendent's Office
5771 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Kaelynn Malott –
Final Design
1601 Lakeshore Drive
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Kaite Craig –
Superintendent's Office
5771 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Kiersten Craven –
Silver Beach Pizza
401 Vine Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Nahla LaFond –
Lincoln Township Library
2099 W. John Beers Road
Stevensville, MI 49127

Paige Lies –
The Garden Ice Arena
1626 W. Glenlord Road
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Piper Josimovich –
Scott Berry Promotions
1509 W. John Beers Road
Stevensville, MI 49127

Sara Emerson –
Spectrum Health Neurology
3950 Hollywood Suite 230
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Tessa Kuhn –
Honor Credit Union
5960 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127

Lakeshore Alumni

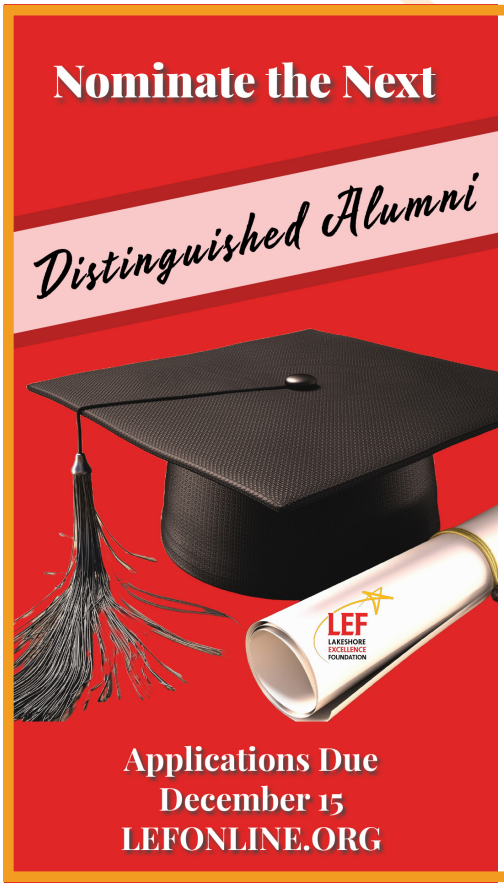
1959 LAKESHORE GRADUATES

The Lakeshore High School Class of 1959 celebrated its 64th reunion at Papa Vino's in St. Joseph this past summer.

Ten members of the original class of '59, plus their family and friends, were in attendance. One member, Lonnie Groenke, traveled all the way from Las Vegas to attend. The group meets monthly for informal lunches and always welcomes former classmates and faculty to join in. Plans are already underway for a special 65th reunion celebration.

Back Row: (left to right) Bob Dixon, Dorothy (Klug) Thar, Jerry Schlutt, Janice (Smith) Miller, Mick Ott, Janet (Ritchey) Snelgrove, Ray Kosarski
Front Row: (left to right) Lonnie Groenke, Darlene (Roth) Damaske, Art Brunke

To make sure you don't miss any details, sign up for our alumni updates at: lefonline.org/alumni/get-registered



The Lakeshore Alumni Association is accepting nominations for their next Distinguished Alumni!

The selection committee—composed of alumni, a current school staff member, and a previous school principal—carefully consider all nominees for a period of three years after their nomination. You may also renominate a candidate as many times as you wish.

The deadline to apply is December 15, 2023.

If you are interested in learning more, or would like to submit a nomination, visit: lefonline.org/alumni/nominate-distinguished-alumni

WHAT WE DO.

The LEF collaborates with staff at Lakeshore Public Schools to identify and support worthy projects that will enrich and supplement the learning opportunities in our schools. We also make a variety of grants for students, teachers, staff and community members to support innovation and professional development.

Visit lefonline.org to learn more about LEF!

Our mission is to "acquire and distribute resources in support of Lakeshore Public Schools for programs and projects aimed at enriching or supplementing learning opportunities for students, staff, and community."

THE FACTS

The state funding for public schools in Michigan continues to be a challenge and Lakeshore is in the bottom 25% when it comes to funding. Yes, 75% of Michigan public school districts receive more state funding on a revenue per student basis!

SIX WAYS TO GIVE

1. Donate conveniently online
2. Swing those clubs
3. Become a Lakeshore Lancer Leader
4. Give us your two cents
5. Endowment Fund
6. Planned Giving

lefonline.org/giving-opportunities

REACH HIGHER

Lakeshore Excellence Foundation

Lakeshore Excellence Foundation ENDOWMENT FUND

The Endowment Fund is our long-term strategy to funding the LEF mission of learning for generations to come.

Annually, the LEF Board evaluates the health of the fund, makes contributions based on giving and project needs, and reinvests the earned interest. If you are interested in learning more about the Endowment Fund, please contact J.C. Anderson at (269) 921-2513 or email at anderjcna@gmail.com.

Ways to keep in touch ...

1. Join the Lakeshore High School Alumni Facebook Group:
   Search for "Lakeshore High School Alumni" and Join the Group

2. Register on the LEF website for email updates:
   lefonline.org/alumni/get-registered

If you graduated from Lakeshore High School, this is a great way to stay in touch!

LAKESHORE Alumni

LEF
LAKESHORE EXCELLENCE FOUNDATION

Learn more about LEF.

Visit our website: LEFonline.org
Follow us on Facebook @LakeshoreExcellence
Read our newsletter in the Lakeshore Light
Contact our Chairman, J.C. Anderson (anderjcna@gmail.com)